

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 10, 2021

Mr. Jeffrey Zients
White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Zients:

We greatly appreciate the efforts that President Biden, Vice President Harris, you, and the entire Biden administration have made to turn the tide against the COVID-19 pandemic. The administration's strong leadership and adherence to science-based principles have given the American people hope that our nation will soon emerge from this public health crisis. We believe the important strides made during the opening months of President Biden's term will make his goal of returning the nation to a sense of normalcy by the July 4th holiday a reality.

We are contacting you on behalf of our constituents who are longshoremen; transportation operators; hotel, restaurant, and retail workers; and small- and medium-sized business owners who continue to suffer financially from the ongoing cruise industry shutdown that began in March 2020.

As you know, the cruise industry is a major employer in our congressional districts and our constituents, including many union members, rely on it for their livelihoods. Before the pandemic, the cruise industry supported 450,000 American jobs and contributed \$56 billion annually both in our states and across the country. To date, more than 300,000 jobs across the broader cruise community have been negatively impacted or lost from the suspension of cruise operations, which has been devastating to our constituents.

The impact on good paying union jobs in our districts is especially dire. According to a recent *Miami Herald* article, the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced the monthly working hours for longshoremen at PortMiami from 90,443 in the month before the pandemic lockdown to just 3,878 at the start of this year. Other longshoreman unions have suffered similar effects. Those lost hours mean that union workers across our districts are not only facing the devastating prospect of lost paychecks, but also the inability to qualify for valuable health and pension benefits. We fear that the elimination of these union jobs, which have been responsible for bringing many of our constituents into the middle class, will have long-term adverse impacts for our communities.

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Because of the great strides that the Biden administration has made in expediting the rollout of vaccines, public health conditions in the United States are now better than the pre-vaccine environment in other countries where cruises have already restarted with success. We are grateful of the CDC's efforts to work with the cruise lines to reopen in mid-July and ensure that they can move forward with safe cruising. We ask for your help in working to restore our constituents' jobs, so that they can fully participate in the economic recovery that so many other Americans are enjoying.

Sincerely,



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

/s/

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

/s/

Val Demings
Member of Congress

/s/

Al Lawson, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/

Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

/s/

Charlie Crist
Member of Congress

/s/

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

/s/

Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress

/s/

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress